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Kurdish Children Resettle Into New Schools

by LuAnne Fantasia
 Gulf Region North



The governor of Kirkuk, Abdul Rahman Mustafa (center), cuts the ribbon to officially open the Panja Ali School in Kirkuk last week, with assistance from the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry's commander, Col. Patrick Stackpole (left). The school was funded through the brigade's Commander's Emergency Response Program, or CERP.
 [USACE photo by LuAnne Fantasia.]

KIRKUK PROVINCE, Iraq—More than 600 school children in this Kurdish enclave moved out of resettlement tents last week, and are settling into two newly constructed schools—complete with windows, hard floors and classroom furniture.

Abdul Rahman Mustafa, governor of Kirkuk, attended an event at one site to recognize the cooperation and the unity it took to make the new schools possible for Kurdish school children.

As the Kurdish people return to Iraq after years of fleeing to the mountains, students have attended classes in weather-torn, time-worn tents. The two new schools were funded by the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry's Commander's Emergency Response Program.

According to Project Engineer Joe Domingo, the contract for a third school will be awarded this month.

"Each school has 11 classrooms and each classroom can accommodate about 25 students," Domingo said. He added that each facility has a computer room, administration building, toilets, and a back-up generator.

Domingo is a project engineer in the Kirkuk Resident Office of the United States Army Corps of Engineers' Gulf Region North. The Corps has quality assurance oversight on reconstruction projects throughout Iraq and Afghanistan.

Due in part to the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund, more than 800 schools have been refurbished or constructed since Iraq's sovereignty in 2004—providing a positive learning environment for some 325,000 Iraqi students nationwide.



Students of the Panja Ali school in Kirkuk celebrate the ribbon-cutting event for their new school, attended by the governor of Kirkuk, Abdul Rahman Mustafa. USACE photo by LuAnne Fantasia



Before the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Program made the construction of this school possible, Kurdish children attended classes in weather-torn tents in a resettlement area of Kirkuk. USACE photos by LuAnne Fantasia

The newly-constructed Panja Ali school in Kirkuk has 11 classrooms and a computer room. It accommodates about 25 students per classroom. The school now has basic furniture and school supplies thanks to the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry's Commander's Emergency Response Program. USACE photos by LuAnne Fantasia

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